

Charter Review Committee (CRC)

Town of Groton, Groton, MA 01450 978-448-1111

Meeting Minutes - September 30, 2015

At Town Hall

All Present: Jane Allen, Robert Collins, John Giger (Finance Comm), Michael Manugian (Chair), Michael McCoy, Stuart Schulman (BOS)

Not present: Bud Robertson (Vice-Chair [for comm.], Finance Comm)

Recorder: Stephen Legge

Visitors: Judy Anderson, Barry Pease (Finance Comm)

Call to Order: Chairman Manugian called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of Wednesday, September 23, 2015. A minor correction was noted. The minutes were approved, as amended, unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

Future Meeting Days:

Chairman Manugian asked for reconsideration of meeting on Veteran's Day, November 11th, due to the amount of work the committee needs to do. Will Town Hall be open? The committee did not object, subject to there being no issues with the town about meeting on a holiday.

Mr. Manugian asked for a list of conflicts from the members for the Wednesdays in 2016 through April.

Discussion of Detailed Review Process for all Public Submissions Received:

A total of 159 submissions were received by the deadline of September 18th. Some submissions covered more than one topic. After assigning the submissions to topics, some submissions were assigned to more than one topic. As a result there were a total of 225 submissions by topic. A list of the submitted proposed changes was made available for review and discussion by the committee, organized by article and section of the charter (95 pages). Also included were categories titled, Procedural, General, "Refer to", in cases where the suggestion was thought not to be a specific charter revision, and "Other", which included a number of topics that were not currently covered in the charter or reflected issues which impacted multiple areas in the charter.

Ms. Allen began a discussion of how provisions in submitted comments might be revised after an initial vote of acceptance by the committee. Mr. Manugian said we can continue to discuss and revise change provisions throughout our review process, up to the time a final vote is taken on all changes to submit to Spring Town Meeting (hereafter, STM).

Referring to the “Draft Detailed Submission Process” (one page), circulated several weeks ago, Mr. Collins proposed deleting reference under “General” to providing a public comment period before voting on each wording change (3rd bullet). He also suggested deleting under “Language” the requirement that the language subcommittee meet on Thursday or Friday after regular committee meetings (2nd bullet).

Mr. Manugian asked Mr. Collins to be the “key language person” for the committee. Mr. Collins accepted, but cautioned against expecting in every case a one-week turnaround time.

Mr. Manugian stated because we have so many submissions to consider, and probably no more than 20 Wednesday meetings to deliberate on them, we will have to limit public discussion time. Mr. Collins suggested each committee member nominate items to recommend that the committee remove from consideration for charter amendment review to limit committee time to what is relevant.

Mr. Schulman observed that nine people have submitted the bulk of all public comments. Mr. Manugian and Ms. Allen stated they had submitted comments based on discussions people had had with them. Mr. Giger expressed concern that some sections of the charter were underrepresented in the submitted comments.

After some discussion on efficiency of process, a consensus was reached that submitters would have up to three minutes each to state their case and provide justifications prior to the committee deliberating a particular change to the charter. Mr. Manugian further proposed that the committee schedule a section or topic area for one evening and have all those who submitted on the specified topic speak before the committee began its deliberations.

Mr. McCoy suggested there be milestones for progress on our schedule, to keep us on track. Mr. Manugian agreed this was a good idea and will submit a revised schedule for review at the next meeting.

Mr. McCoy also suggested that governance items be front-loaded on the schedule. He said these would inform all discussions that follow.

Mr. Manugian felt that applicable definitions might be best addressed after each major topic discussion rather than reviewing all definitions at the start of the process.

A summary of the top categories of comments was presented to the committee:

1. Finance and budget (31 submissions)
2. Town Manager powers and duties (24 submissions)
3. HR functions and the personnel board (14 submissions)
4. BOS appointing authority (11 submissions)

5. Definitions (9 submissions)
6. Section 4-1, Appointments, Qualifications and Review (8 submissions)

Mr. Manugian asked if there was a consensus to do our work by subject area. There was no objection to this. He asked if we were finished with identification of procedural items. Again, there was no objection. He then proposed that general items (First 6+ pages of the submissions list) be left for last. The committee agreed that it would make sense to first have a picture of what the changed Charter might look like before it reviewed the general submissions.

Ms. Allen asked if members thought the appointment process for the Finance Committee should be considered part of the Finance/Budget subject area. Mr. Schulman thought it should be a separate discussion - all appointment authorities should be considered together. He claimed appointments are politics, not finance.

Mr. Schulman also suggested that “new” things, or most important subjects be our starting point in deliberations. He also proposed combining discussions of the BOS and Town Manager’s powers and duties.

Mr. Giger asked, what levels of detail regarding powers and duties are appropriate to put in the charter?

There was a general consensus to make Finance/Budget the first priority and to take this up at the next meeting or soon thereafter. This was revised later in the meeting as noted below.

There was discussion about how to conduct meetings:

1. Whether to take public comment first, then have the committee deliberate, or vice-versa;
2. Should the Finance/Budget inputs (31) be sub-classified?
3. Should the budget process be considered first, as a sub-category of finance?
4. Should there be dialog allowed during the presentations?
5. For how many people could we make time for presentations in a two-hour meeting?

Mr. McCoy noted there were a number of submissions made by the charter review committee members themselves – should these be treated differently from inputs from the public? Mr. Manugian stated that board members should be considered the same as the public in this respect.

Mr. McCoy asked how will we inform the public about our progress, meeting by meeting? Mr. Manugian said we will use email to invite people to come and present, if they wish, by specific submission ID number. Also there will be a prospective meeting schedule posted on the town website. The committee decided against emailing the schedule as it was updated to submitters. The committee will try to give a 2-3 week notice, but cannot go much farther than that since it is not clear how quickly the process will progress.

Mr. McCoy suggested we begin next week with some simpler topics, to try out our process and learn from experience before taking on the meatier topics like finance/budget. This idea was accepted by the committee.

It was agreed upon to attempt “New” topics such as information technology, professional development, public relations, custody of records, reporting structure and standards of conduct.

Discussion returned to the budget process. Mr. Manugian asked all members of the committee to individually sub-categorize the budget process for discussion at the next meeting. Mr. Manugian also asked all to think about how to plan and schedule all submissions for the full duration until STM.

Visitor Ms. Anderson asked if the committee will ascertain whether people intend to show up for public discussions of submissions.

Visitor Mr. Pease asked that Submission #181 be also considered under the topic, “Public Relations”. He asked will the public be allowed to make graphic presentations within the three minute period, and what media will be permissible or supported.

Mr. Giger said he will send out an email to all respondents explaining the process and what media might be supported. Town Clerk Mr. Bouchard has the email list of all submitters. Mr. Giger also said the committee will post periodic messages about scheduling. Mr. Manugian will assist Mr. Giger with drafting the first email.

Ms. Anderson proposed that slides contain no more than five lines.

Mr. Schulman will provide the town laptop for use giving presentations.

Other Business:

Mr. Schulman added that for scheduling purposes, the committee needs to be mindful that Town Manager has set a deadline date of March 21, 2016 for the BOS public hearing on all submissions for STM. Mr. Manugian will update the charter submission review schedule worksheet accordingly.

Members were requested to copy Mr. Legge (committee recorder) on all materials the committee is looking at.

Mr. Manugian presented a rough draft of a presentation to be given at Fall Town Meeting. It presented the status of the review process and instructions as to how people can participate in the process.

Mr. McCoy said he will be absent from next week’s meeting.

The meeting was adjourned with unanimous consent at 8:53 PM.

**** The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 7th, at 7:00 PM. ****

EXHIBITS:

- A. Charter Submission Review Schedule Worksheet
- B. Submission Summary
- C. Fall 2015 TM Presentation
- D. DRAFT Detail Submission Review Process 20150929

Charter Submission Review Schedule Worksheet

Approx 19 meetings to discuss 159 submissions before Spring, 2016 Warrant Closes

<i>Date</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>Topic(s)</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Notes</i>
10/7	McCoy			
10/14	Schulman			
10/21	<none>			
10/28	Schulman			
11/4	<none>			
11/11	Giger Schulman			
11/18	Robertson			
12/2	<none>			
12/9	<none>			
12/16	<none>			
12/23	Collins Schulman			
12/30	Collins Giger			
Jan		Spring Town Meeting Warrant Opens		We can request a place holder Exact date not yet available
1/6				
1/13				
1/20				
1/27				

Charter Submission Review Schedule Worksheet

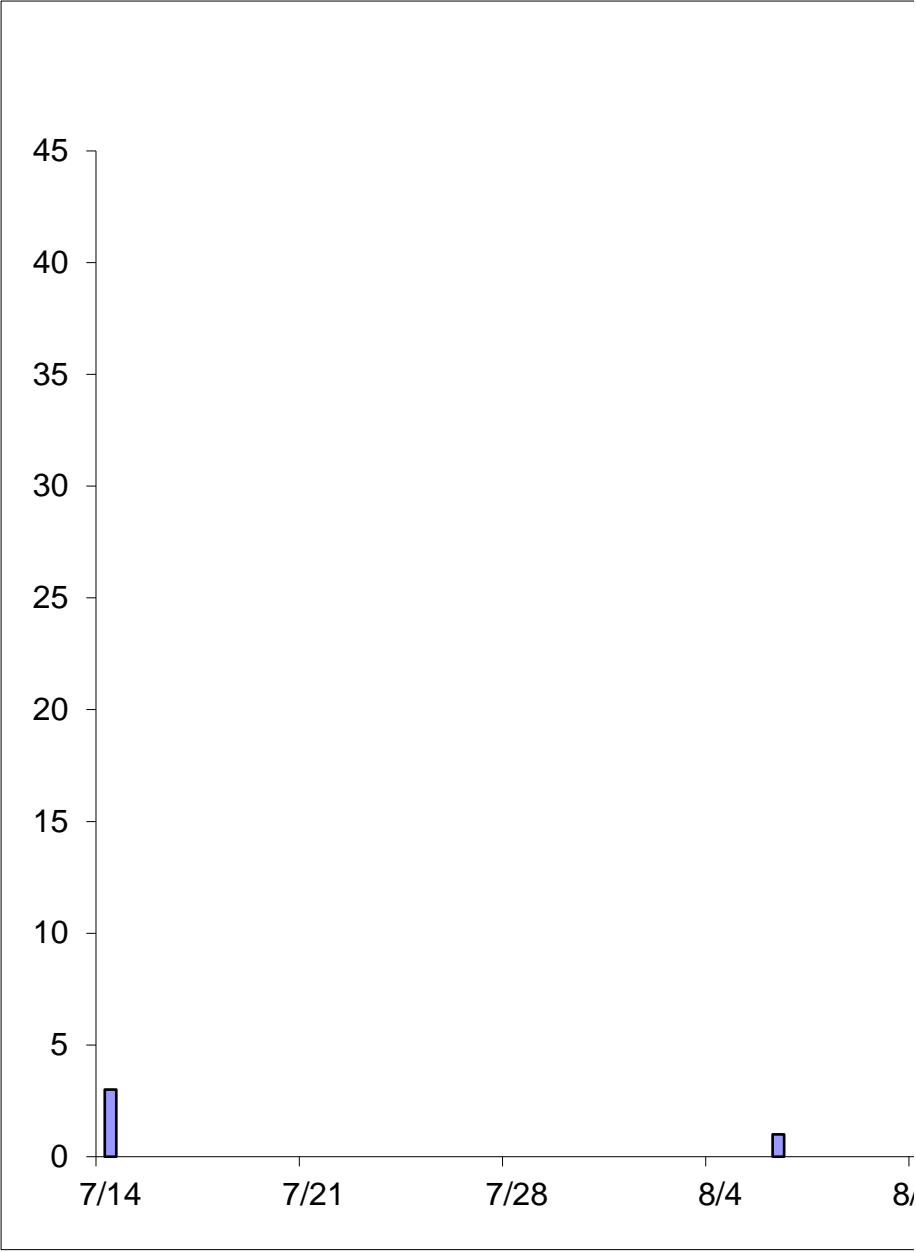
<i>Date</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>Topic(s)</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Notes</i>
2/3				
2/10				
2/17				
2/24				
Feb		Spring Town Meeting Warrant Closes		Exact date not yet available
3/2		Submit draft changes for legal review Review changes with Selectmen, TM, Depts		
3/9		Review changes from legal		
3/16		Public Hearing on Draft Day 1		
3/23 (Thu)		Public Hearing on Draft Day 2		
3/24		Create final draft		
4/6		Create final draft		
4/13		Public Hearing on Final Day 1		
4/14 (Thu)		Public Hearing on Final Day 2		
4/20				
4/25 (Mon)		Spring Town Meeting Day 1		
5/2 (Mon)		Spring Town Meeting Day 2		

Submissions ContactName

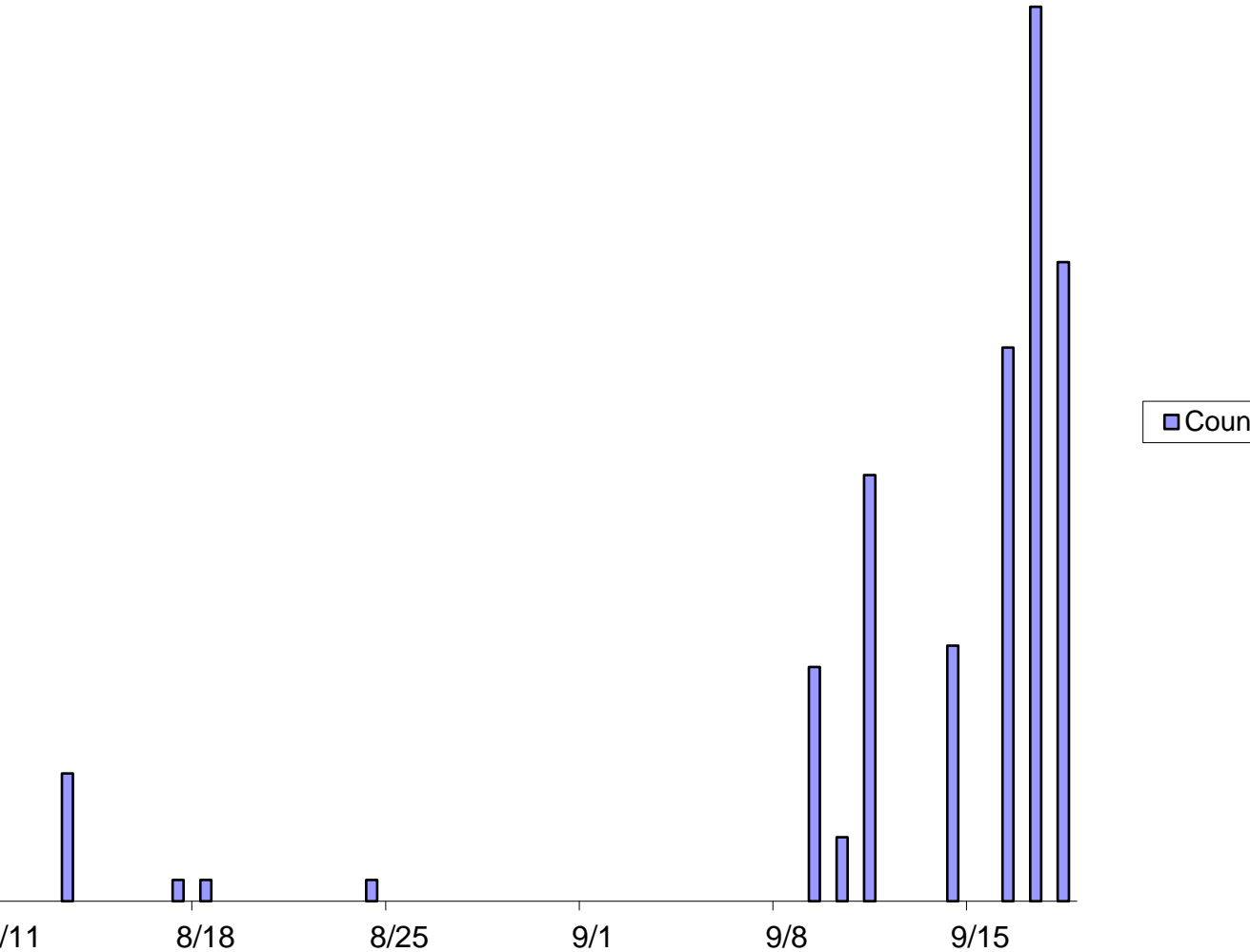
8 Anonymous
3 APEX
5 Barry Pease
3 Becky Pine
2 Berta Erickson
3 Bob and Becky Pine
1 Cable Advisory Committee
14 Connie Sartini
1 Deborah Johnson
1 Edward Strachan
3 Ellen Valentine
6 Finance Committee
1 Ginger Vollmar
2 Groton Sewer Commission
3 Groton Water Commission
8 Jack Petropoulos
1 James Gmeiner
9 Jane Allen
1 Janet Shea
1 Jeffrey Wallens
2 John Ellenberger
31 John Giger
1 Mary Jennings
8 Michael Bouchard
1 Michael Hartnett
22 Michael Manugian
1 Park Commission
1 Peter Cunningham
1 Planning Board
2 Robert Collins
8 Russ Harris
1 Scott Evans Harker
1 Stuart Schulman
1 Town of Groton Department Heads
1 Vannessa Abraham
1 William Knuff

159 Total

Received	Count
14-Jul-15	3
#####	1
#####	6
#####	1
#####	1
#####	1
#####	11
#####	3
#####	20
#####	12
#####	26
#####	42
#####	30



Submissions by Date Received



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Submissions Section

3 Procedural

11 General

1 Refer to Cable Advisory Committee

1 Refer to Town Government Study Committee

31 New: Finance and Budget

6 New: Committees

14 New: HR Function and Personnel Board

3 New: Groton-Dunstable Regional Schools

1 New: Information Technology

2 New: Professional Development

1 New: Public Relations

1 New: Records Custodian

2 New: Reporting Structure

1 New: Standards of Conduct

1 1-4 Division of Powers

1 1-5 Interpretation of Powers

2 1-8 Ethical Standards

9 1-9 Definitions

1 2-1 Town Meeting

1 2-5 Warrants

2 2-6 Initiation of Warrant Articles

3 2-7 Availability of Town Officials at Town Meetings; Conflicting Meetings

1 2-11 Report to the Voters

2 ARTICLE 3: ELECTED OFFICERS

7 3-1 General

2 3-2 Board of Selectmen

7 3-2 (a) Composition, Term of Office [Selectmen]

11 3-2 (b) [Selectmen] Powers and Duties

14 3-2 (d) [Selectmen] Appointing Authority

1 3-4 Town Moderator

1 3-5 Groton Housing Authority

1 3-6 Planning Board

1 3-8 Trustees of the Groton Public Library

3 ARTICLE 4: TOWN MANAGER

8 4-1 Appointment, Qualifications and Review Procedure

24 4-2 Powers and Duties

1 4-2 (e) Act as Negotiator [Town Manager]

3 4-3 Removal and Suspension

1 4-4 Vacancy in the Office of the Town Manager

2 4-5 Screening Committee

1 5-1 Organization of Town Agencies

7 5-3 Department of Finance

6 5-4 Department of Public Works

4 ARTICLE 6: FINANCE AND FISCAL PROCEDURES

7 6-2 Submission of Budget and Budget Message

1 6-3 Budget Message

1 6-4 The Budget

1 6-6 Capital Improvement Plan

2 6-7 Audits

1 7-5 Rules and Regulations

3 7-6 Periodic Charter Review

1 7-7 Removals

1 7-9 Notice of Vacancies

1 ARTICLE 8: TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

225 Total

DRAFT
Town Of Groton
Charter Review Committee
Interim Report

Groton Fall Town Meeting
October 19, 2015

Members

- Jane Allen
- Bob Collins
- John Giger, Clerk
- Mike Manugian, Chair
- Michael McCoy
- Bud Robertson, Vice Chair
- Stuart Schulman

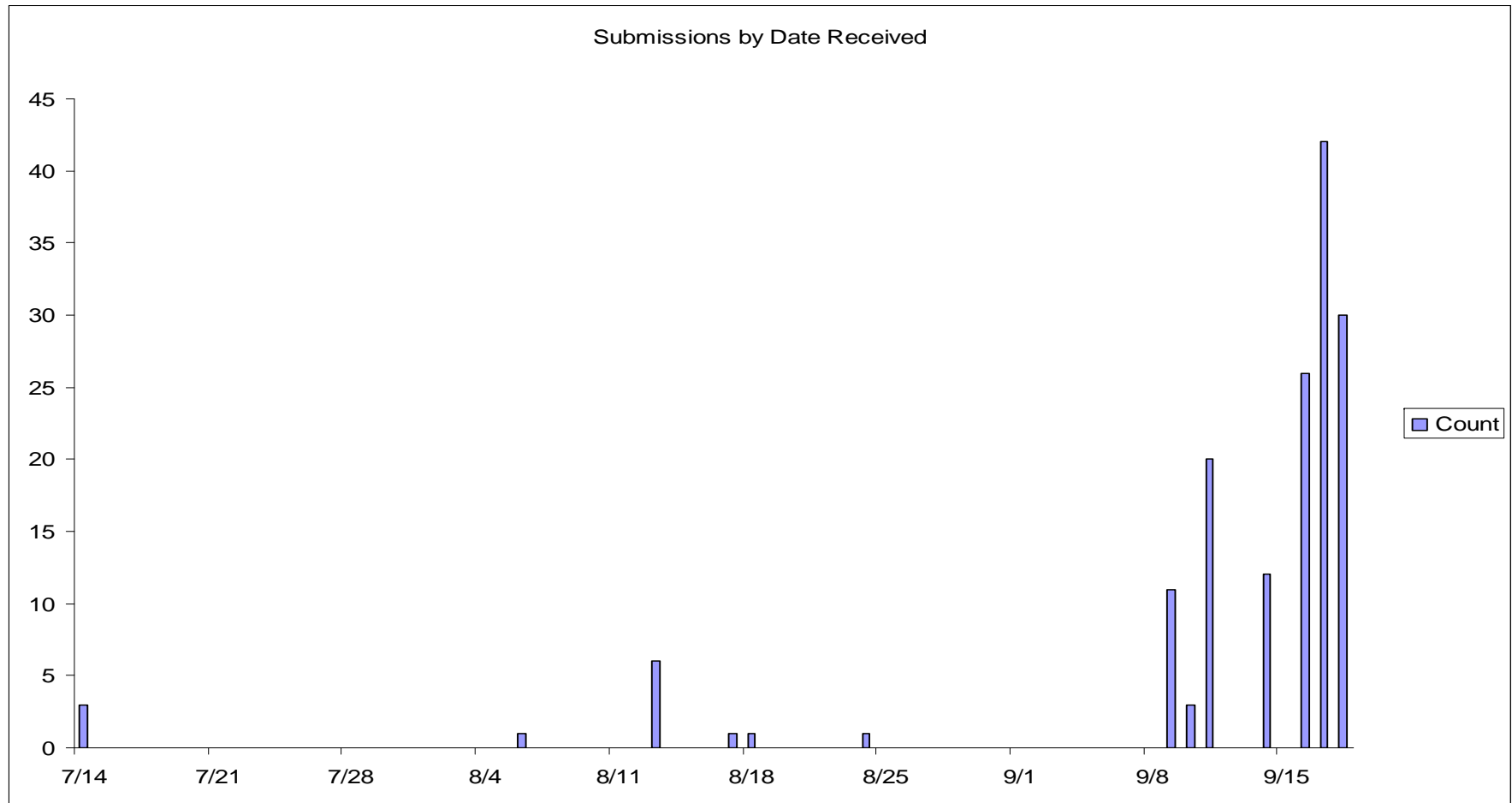
Submissions Received

159 Submissions

36 Submitters

#	<i>Subject</i>
3	Procedural
11	General
2	Referral
31	Finance and Budget
17	Other
14	HR Function and Personnel Board
13	Article 1: INCORPORATION, EXISTENCE AND AUTHORITY
8	ARTICLE 2: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
47	ARTICLE 3: ELECTED OFFICERS (primarily for Selectmen)
42	ARTICLE 4: TOWN MANAGER
14	ARTICLE 5: ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION
16	ARTICLE 6: FINANCE AND FISCAL PROCEDURES
6	ARTICLE 7: GENERAL PROVISIONS
1	ARTICLE 8: TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Submissions by Date Recieved



How to Participate

- Read minutes, submissions, comments, related documents on the Charter Review web site accessible from Town of Groton web site
- Participate in discussions at committee meetings
- Submit comments to
TownCharterReviewCommittee@townofgroton.org
- Come to public hearing(s) for draft recommendations
- Come to public hearing(s) for final recommendations
- Vote on recommendations, if any, at Spring, 2016 Town Meeting

Submission Review Schedule

- Committee meets most Wednesdays
- Schedule posted on Committee site accessible from Charter Review link at TownOfGroton.org
- Submissions grouped for discussion by subject area
- Schedule will identify charter sections and/or subjects to be discussed
- Public comment period before each vote is taken

Note: Review schedule is subject to change

DRAFT Detailed Submission Review Process

Discussion & votes: Full Committee

Research: Research Persons

Wording: Language Person

General

- Invite submitters to meeting in which substance and wording associated with their submissions will be discussed.
- Publish review schedule on web site.
- Provide public comment period before voting on each substance or wording change.
- Allow public to comment on submissions via email or US mail until Spring Town Meeting, including updating of db and online report.
- Present process to public via press release and Fall Town Meeting report

Each Meeting

1. Read proposed submission in its entirety
2. Ask submitter, if present, to provide any additional information
3. Determine if the submission is appropriate for the charter. If not, request public comment from those present, then vote to either dispose or send it to appropriate town entity.
4. Review the way the process works with the current charter wording
5. Discuss change.
6. If we feel the no change to the charter is appropriate, request public comment from those present, then vote to dispose with reason why.
7. If more information is needed, ask clerk to document question and refer question to a committee member for research. Continue discussion and refer any additional questions to a committee member for Research. Postpone substance decision until Researchers report at next meeting.
8. Request public comment from those present, then vote on substance of change. If vote is to deny, document reason why. If vote is to accept, refer substance to Language Person to develop specific wording and transitional wording, if any.
9. Review and vote on change and transition wording from Language Person

Research Person

- A committee member assigned to an issue requiring research. May select different member for each issue.
- Develops answers to questions raised during discussions of substance or wording changes from Wed meeting.
- Presents answers at next Wed meeting.

Answers questions such as

- How does Groton do this now?
- What do other towns do?
- What, if anything, do the MGLs say?

Language Person

- Consists of one committee member to draft all required charter wording changes
- Meets on Thu or Fri after each Wed night committee meeting
- Develops specific charter wording changes to support substance changes approved by committee in previous Wed meeting.
- Develops wording for transitional process, if required.
- Presents work changes for review at next committee meeting.